

Another random memory: Jury Duty, 1989

I received my first jury duty summons in the mail in 1989, at the age of 19. I thought that was something special. I got all dressed up in my black and white polka dot dress, black shiny heels, pink lipstick and bleach blonde hair cut swirled around my chin, slanted. I soon discovered that jury duty is not fun. I sat and waited in the big room with the rest of Dallas County for several hours, waiting for my name to be called, trapped behind the most annoying man ever. I sure hope he never sees this. He ran his mouth from the moment I got there to the moment my name was finally called, talking to the man who sat beside him. Every now and then the talking man would glance behind him and look at me. I bristled with discomfort. I could sense his man vibe thing. I admit he was cute but I could tell he was older, like in his mid-20's. That was too old for me. Finally my name was called and I went to the front to get a paper or something, whatever they gave you that told you where to go next and when. I came and sat back down and the guy asked what I do. I said I worked at a music store, then I left the room.

I found myself next in a court room, sitting among other people who were selected to be interviewed by some lawyers, and I got my very first glimpse of a real life convict. He sat in the middle of the room, handcuffed. He looked about my age, Hispanic, and really cute. He looked at me and smiled, made me blush, I looked away, but back again, and he was still smiling at me. This got me to laughing under my breath, and the lawyers could see what was going on, and I was dismissed immediately. Little do they know I would have given a fair and wise opinion. And it wasn't my fault that the criminal made me laugh. I used to want to do prison ministry, but I just don't know if the whole male/female thing would compromise my efforts. What if I was attracted to one of them? So I know it's recommended that you stick with your own gender, but that might prove to be even worse*. All I know is, locked up people are fascinating. Think of the stories they have to tell, hidden away deep inside their souls. I think each prisoner should receive a laptop instead of each child.

So I go to work the next day and there's a huge bouquet of roses on the counter with my name on them. They were from Talking Man. Yes. He tracked me down. I was flattered and responded. We dated. He was a science teacher at a private school across town, where he told me of a job opening for an art teacher at the school's summer camp, which I applied for and got. I spent the summer of '89 showing kids how to make Fruit Loop necklaces, cotton ball sheep, and toilet paper roll rocket ships. And the best part about it? I got to make every project up, and the school funded the supplies. What fun. Except for the snobbish looks from the girls who were from that part of town who also worked at the camp. They didn't like me so much. I didn't drive a BMW and their rich boyfriends all thought I was fun. I pulled up in my clunker each morning with my Guns n Roses sticker on the back window (the skull in the black hat) and I wore torn jeans, on purpose.

So while working at this school I ended my fling with the teacher and started dating a guy from Iran. His mother made me park behind their house, not out front. My car was that bad.

*I don't mean I'd be attracted to the women. I'm just thinking of how scary they can be. I don't mean that in a bad way. It's just that I think the men would be nicer to me. Is it true that people who go there for child abuse get treated the worst by other inmates? I think that's really nice.

I have a friend who told me recently all about her stay there. She said she got no rest, even from her bunk she could see straight into the showers. There was no privacy. That would be the thing that would drive me insane- no time alone. I wonder if that's why some inmates do things to be put in isolation. Maybe they just need time to themselves.

I try to remember prisoners all over the world when I pray. They're paying for their wrongs that show, when we're free and on the loose carrying around wrongs that don't show. What's the difference? They broke a law of the land, but everyone breaks God's laws each and every day.